

Amendments to the Claims:

Claims 21, 22, 28 and 30 are cancelled, claims 23, 25, 27 and 29 are amended and claims 31 to 34 are added as set forth hereinafter.

Listing of Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Claims 1 to 22 (Cancelled).

23. (Currently Amended) The method of ~~claim 22~~ claim 31,
~~comprising wherein said quantity is a signal value (U); and, said~~
~~method comprises~~ the further step of detecting said one of said
~~operator-controlled~~ driver-controlled functions when said
5 slope (dU/dt) of said time-dependent course of said signal
value (U) lies in a pregiven region.

24. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 23, wherein said
pregiven region is defined by a threshold value.

25. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 23, comprising the
further step of selecting said pregiven region so that the
time-dependent course of said signal value (U) associated
therewith occurs only via an automatic reset of said
5 ~~operator-controlled~~ driver-controlled element.

26. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 25, wherein said automatic reset is achieved with an abrupt reduction of said spring force.

27. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 26, wherein said abrupt reduction of said spring force is effected by the spring constant assigned to the corresponding ~~operator-controlled~~ driver-controlled function.

28. (Cancelled).

29. (Currently Amended) The method of ~~claim 21~~ claim 31, comprising the further step of detecting one of said ~~operator-controlled~~ driver-controlled functions only when said one ~~operator-controlled~~ driver-controlled function is detected several times within a pregiven time interval.

30. (Cancelled).

31. (New) A method for detecting the actuation of a driver-controlled element for a vehicle actuatable to assume different degrees of displacement and displaceable to a stop of said driver-controlled element, the method comprising the steps of:

realizing different driver-controlled functions of said driver-controlled element in dependence upon the degree of displacement or position of said driver-controlled element

wherein: a first one of said driver-controlled functions
10 comprises inputting a driver command torque in dependence upon a
degree of actuation of said driver-controlled element; and, a
second one of said driver-controlled functions comprises a
kickdown function for an automatic transmission or an escape
switch function for the case that the vehicle has a speed-limit
15 function and said second driver-controlled function is activated
when the driver-controlled element is actuated completely or up
to the vicinity of said stop;

actuating said driver-controlled element against a spring
force with two degrees of displacement being characterized by two
20 different spring constants, respectively;

determining a quantity (U) which characterizes the spring
constant at the actual degree of actuation of said
driver-controlled element;

detecting at least one of said driver-controlled functions
25 of the driver-controlled element in dependence upon said
determined quantity (U) which characterizes the spring constant;

utilizing a slope-determination unit to plot said
quantity (U) as a function of time and to obtain a slope dU/dt
thereof; and,

30 applying said slope dU/dt to a comparator and, if said
slope dU/dt is greater than a threshold value, then said
comparator detects said second driver-controlled function,
otherwise, said comparator detects said first driver-controlled
function.

32. (New) The method of claim 31, wherein said

driver-controlled element is a driver-controlled accelerator pedal.

33. (New) An arrangement for detecting the actuation of a driver-controlled element for a vehicle actuatable to assume different degrees of displacement and displaceable to a stop of said driver-controlled element, the arrangement comprising:

5 , means for realizing different driver-controlled functions of said driver-controlled element in dependence upon the degree of displacement or position of said driver-controlled element wherein: a first one of said driver-controlled functions comprises inputting a driver command torque in dependence upon a
10 degree of actuation of said driver-controlled element; and, a second one of said driver-controlled functions comprises a kickdown function for an automatic transmission or an escape switch function for the case that the vehicle has a speed-limit function and said second driver-controlled function is activated
15 when the driver-controlled element is actuated completely or up to the vicinity of said stop;

 said driver-controlled element being actuatable against a spring force with two degrees of displacement being characterized by two different spring constants, respectively;

20 means for determining a quantity (U) which characterizes the spring constant at the actual degree of actuation of said driver-controlled element;

 means for detecting at least one of said driver-controlled functions of the driver-controlled element in dependence upon
25 said determined quantity which characterizes the spring constant;

a slope-determination unit for plotting said quantity as a function of time and to obtain the slope dU/dt thereof; and,

a comparator for receiving said slope dU/dt and, if said slope dU/dt is greater than a threshold value, then said
30 comparator detects said second driver-controlled function,
otherwise, said comparator detects said first driver-controlled function.

34. (New) The arrangement of claim 33, wherein said driver-controlled element is a driver-controlled accelerator pedal.